



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

\$2 MILLION SEIZED BY ICE AGENTS

BROWNSVILLE, Texas — Special agents with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) last night seized more than \$2 million, and arrested and charged a Harlingen man with illegally transporting U.S. currency.

Pilar Navarro, 30, appeared in federal court this morning before U.S. Magistrate Judge Felix Recio. According to court documents filed, Navarro was driving a tractor-trailer and carrying two suitcases full of money. As he pulled over at a nearby residence in Santa Rosa, Texas, Cameron County Sheriff's deputies and ICE agents approached Navarro at the parked trailer. Navarro consented to a search of his vehicle. During the search, ICE special agents and sheriff's deputies discovered and seized more than \$2 million in U.S. currency concealed inside two black suitcases.

The newly created Patriot Act legislation, signed into law in 2001, provides the government with a new criminal provision, which punishes a person for violating currency-reporting statutes. Before passage of the Act, law enforcement officers seized the hidden currency, but could not charge the offender. ICE will pursue prosecuting criminals that are caught trying to conceal large quantities of currency in violation of Federal law.

"This is a perfect example of the outstanding cooperation between ICE and local and state law enforcement agencies," said Alonzo Pena, special agent-in-charge of the ICE office in San Antonio. "We are dedicated to identifying and dismantling these types of criminal operations wherever and whenever we find them."

"The working relationship continues to be stellar with ICE and this case is a perfect example," said Omar Lucio, Cameron County Sheriff. "Our team of deputies will continue to assist the Department of Homeland Security in order to protect the American public."

Navarro is being held at the Cameron County jail pending the outcome of his case.

Members of the public are reminded that this is only a criminal complaint. A defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's responsibility to prove the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.